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LUTHERAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY GETTYSBURG, PA.

PROCEEDINGS

LUTHERAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

OF A

CONVENTION OF MINISTERS AND DELEGATES

FROM

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCHES,

IN THE STATE OF NEW-YORK.

CONVENED IN THE CHAPEL,

IN FORDSBUSH, MONTGOMERY COUNTY,

May 24, 1837.

ALBANY:

PRINTED BY HOFFMAN & WHITE.

PROCEEDINGS, &c.

Fordsbush, May 24, 1837—*Wednesday,* 10 *O'clock A. M.*

Pursuant to a resolution of the Western Conference, the ministers and delegates from a number of Churches in the state of New-York, assembled this day in Convention, in the Chapel at 10 o'clock A. M. for the purpose of organising another Synod in the Lutheran Church.

MARTIN MARCLEY, was appointed Chairman, and ANDREW L. WEATHERWAX, chosen Secetary.

The Convention opened with prayer, by the Rev. Philip Wieting, of Sharon, N. Y.

The following ministers appeared and took their seats as members of the Convention, viz:—

Rev. PHILIP WIETING, from Sharon, Schoharie county.
" JOHN D. LAWYER, from Sandlake, Rensselaer county.
" WILLIAM OTTMAN, from Canajoharie, Montgomery county.
" L. SWACKHAMER, from Manheim, Herkimer county.

The following brethren then produced their credentials, were enrolled as Delegates and took their seats, viz:—

New-Rhinebeck Church—Martin Marcley, John C. Shutts,

Sandlake Church—John Uline, Andrew L. Weatherwax,

Fordsbush Church—Abraham Walrath, Abraham Arndt, Abraham Waggoner, John Fake, William Cronkhite, John P. Smith,

Newville Church—John M. Gardinier, Henry Ostrander, John Spoor, Jacob Walter,

Danube Church—John Davy, Abraham Shaver, John Davy, junior, Jonas Rice, William Davy.

Canajoharie Church—Winther Reagles, Andrew Roof.

Southville Church—Henry I. Deifendorf, Jacob Wieting.

Richmondville Church—John I. Shafer.

Summit Church—Martin Spurbeck.

Clay Church—Benjamin Diefendorf.

Arcadia Church—Lewis Schneider.

It appeared to the Convention that the following churches had appointed delegates, who were prevented from attending, viz:—

Poestenkill, Manheim, Oswego, South Worcester, Parishville.

On motion it was

Resolved, That all brethren present be admitted as advisory members. The following names were recorded, viz:—David Ottman, N. Van Alstyne, D. Swackhammer, Henry Kronkhite, John Rice, John C. Kronkhite, Adolph Walradt.

The Convention being now ready for business, Br. P. Wieting then read the circular letter which had been sent and addressed by him, as chairman of the Western Conference, to ministers and churches in this state, by which this Convention was called, and which stated that the objects of the same was to take into consideration the expediency of forming a Synod in the Lutheran Church, and in which was presented some of the reasons for a new association.

After which several members of the Convention entered upon the discussion of the subject, and having occupied the time until the hour of 12 o'clock, noon, when the Convention adjourned until 2 o'clock afternoon.

Prayer by Br, W. Ottman.

Two O'clock, P. M.

The Convention met and opened with prayer by Br. N. Van Alstine.

The subject before the Convention was further discussed and fully considered by the brethren, and having continued for some time, when on motion of Br. John Fake, and seconded by Br. H. I. Dievendorf it was unanimously

Resolved, As the sense of this Convention, that it is a solemn and imperative duty, now to form another Synod in the Evangelical Lutheran Church.

The Convention having thus decided upon organising a Synod, it vas further, on motion of Br. John Davy

Resolved, That a committee be appointed to draft a Constitution for he government of the Synod.

Committee.—Brs. P. Wieting, William Ottman, J. I. Shafer, H. I. Dievendorf, Abm. Walradt, John Davy, Winther Reagles.

Recess till half past 3 o'clock, P. M.

After recess, Br. Wieting from the committee, reported a Constitu-

tion for the government of the Synod. The report was first read entire, after which the proposed Constitution was read and taken up by articles and considered section by section, and having progressed in the same as far as article xii. sec. 6, and the hour of half past 6 having arrived, it was on motion

Resolved, That the Convention adjourn until to-morrow at 9 o'clock A. M.

Prayer by Br. L. Swackhamer.

Thursday, May 25, 1837.

Convention met at 9 o'clock A. M.

Prayer by Br. B. Diefendorf.

The Convention proceeded to the further consideration and discussion of the Constitution. And after some time spent, and having been altered and amended in sundry places, the Constitution was finished.—It was then again read entire, and finally passed and was unanimously adopted as the Constitution of the Synod, in form as follows:

We, the Ministers and Delegates of Lutheran churches in the state of New-York, in Convention assembled, acknowledging the Lord Jesus Christ as the supreme Head of the church, and the Word of God as the sufficient and infallible rule of faith and practice, and trusting in the protection of Almighty God, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, do ordain and establish for our government the following

CONSTITUTION:

Article I:—*The Title and Powers of the Synod.*

1. This Association shall be called the Franckean Synod of the Lutheran Church.

2. The Synod shall be composed of ordained ministers, licentiates, and delegates only, who are members of the churches they represent.

3. The number of lay-delegates shall be equal to the number of ministers and licentiates, who have charge of a ministerial district comprised of a church or churches.

4. The Synod shall have power to examine into the official character of all its members, and decide on all charges against ministers and licentiates—to license and ordain ministers to preach the gospel—to attend to the business of the churches in connection with the Synod, and give advisory counsel in all cases which may be presented for consideration, and to provide supplies for destitute churches. The objects of the Synod shall be to devise and promote christian intercourse and communion with each other, and to unite our counsels and

efforts for the welfare of the churches—the salvation of souls, and the general interests of Christ's Kingdom.

5. The Synod shall hold one session annually and oftener by adjournment, and the time and place of such meeting shall be determined at the previous meeting of the Synod.

6. Five members of the Synod shall constitute a quorum to transact business: provided that not less than three of that number shall be ordained ministers.

7. The Synod shall have power to enact such by-laws, rules of order and regulations, as shall not be inconsistent with this constitution.

Article II:—*The Officers of the Synod.*

1. The officers of the Synod shall be a President, Secretary and Treasurer, who shall be annually chosen by ballot, from among the ordained ministers, who are regular members of the Synod. The election to these offices shall require a majority of the votes of the members present.

2. The same persons shall not be eligible for more than three successive years.

Article III:—*Of the President.*

1. No Minister shall be elected to the office of President unless he shall have been a regular ordained minister for not less than five years.

2. It shall be the duty of the President to preside at all meetings of the Synod—to deliver a synodical discourse at each session, and in conjunction with the pastor of the place shall appoint the persons who are to preach during the session.

3. He shall make a report at the opening of every Annual Session of Synod of all the official business transacted by him, and other important events which have occurred in relation to the churches during the past year, and may recommend for their consideration any subject or measure which he deems necessary or calculated to promote the cause of God.

4. The President has a right to take part in the discussions and to vote as the rest of the members.

5. He shall appoint all committees, which are not to be elected by ballot.

6. He shall take care that each subject be duly considered, before a decision is made. He shall distinctly rehearse each motion, and when the house is ready for the question, he shall take the vote on the same.

7. It is an important part of his office to advise and counsel the

members of the Synod in relation to pastoral duties and admonish them to faithfulness and holiness of life and warn every brother who errs in doctrine and practice.

ARTICLE IV :—*Of the Secretary.*

1. The Secretary shall keep a faithful and accurate account of all the proceedings of the Synod ; carefully preserve all the papers, the seal, &c. of the Synod, subject to their direction, and shall do all the official writing not otherwise provided for.

2. He shall keep a register of the names of all the ministers and licentiates, arranged according to their age in office, and also of all the churches, whether vacant or not, connected with the Synod.

3, If the President should resign his office, or depart this life, then the Secretary shall succeed him, and discharge the duties of the President until the next session of the Synod.

4. If the Secretary should resign or depart this life, the President shall require the property of the Synod and deliver the same to a minister, whom he shall appoint as Secretary until the next session of the Synod.

ARTICLE V :—*Of the Treasurer.*

1. The Treasurer shall receive and take charge of all the monies collected for the Synod, and he shall keep them, or pay out, as the Synod shall direct. He shall present at each annual meeting, a detailed and accurate account of the receipts and expenditures of the past year.

2. Should the Treasurer during the recess of the Synod, resign his office or depart this life, the President shall demand and receive all the monies and other property to be delivered into the hands of a member of the Synod, whom he shall appoint as Treasurer until the next session of the Synod.

ARTICLE VI :—*Of Churches.*

1. We recognize the principle that christians associated together for worship and the administration of the gospel ordinances, constitute a complete church, and that every such church has a right to exercise all discipline and government and bound to execute all the laws of Christ to its own edification.

2. Every church which shall become hereafter connected with this Synod, shall be required to adopt the Constitution, and make annual contributions, according to its ability, towards defraying the necessary expences of Synod; and it shall be deemed irregular for any minister or church to withdraw from the Synod, without a regular dismission therefrom.

3. When a church or churches, constituting a ministerial district, neglect to send a delegate, or a vacant church a commissioner, or to make any report or communication to the Synod for three years suc-

cessively, it shall be considered as having dissolved its connection with the Synod; and may, if the Synod deem proper, be dropped from the minutes.

4. The Synod shall have power to exclude from its connection and fellowship, any church that shall be proved to have become fundamentally corrupt in doctrine or practice.

5. Every vacant church may send a Commissioner to the annual sessions of the Synod.

Article VII:—*Of Delegates.*

1. Every lay-delegate shall have equal rights with the ministers in the business of the Synod; except so much as relates to licensing applicants and ordaining ministers.

2. Every commissioner shall have a right to take part in the discussions and offer resolutions, but has no vote on any question.

3. No person shall be entitled to a seat in this Synod as delegate or commissioner who has not attained the age of twenty-one years, and who is not a regular communicant member of the church. Neither shall he be a slaveholder, nor engaged directly or indirectly in the manufacture and traffic of intoxicating liquors to be used as a beverage.

Article VIII:—*Of Ordained Ministers.*

1. The Ministerial Office is a divine institution, and is intended for the sanctification of believers, for the conversion of sinners and the reproof of the wicked. All ordained ministers in the church of God, are of equal rank, and it is incumbent on them to be faithful in the discharge of their pastoral and ministerial duties; to maintain godliness; advocate the high and holy principles of the Gospel and oppose all moral evil.

2. No minister shall interfere with the churches of another minister of this body, by exercising any ministerial duties, except by his request or consent; but shall endeavor by all means to promote the peace and harmony of the churches and to increase the love and attachment between them and their pastors.

3. Ordained ministers are amenable for their conduct to the Synod only, and no censure shall be passed, or suspension or exclusion take place, without the concurrence of a majority of two thirds of the ordained ministers, together with a majority of the licentiates and delegates present at a regular meeting; for which purpose the votes shall be taken separate.

4. When ordained ministers of other evangelical denominations apply for admission into this Synod, the President shall appoint a committee of ministers, to examine them as to their testimonials and views of doctrine and report on the same, or be examined before the whole Synod; after which it shall require a majority of two thirds of the ordained ministers, together with a majority of the licentiates and delegates present to obtain admission; and in this case the votes of the Synod shall be taken separate.

5. It shall be the duty of every minister to attend the sessions of the Synod, or if unable to attend, to inform the Synod by letter of the same and the causes, together with a regular report of the state of his churches. Any minister who shall neglect the above duty, shall be subject to the censure of the Synod; and if persisted in for three years in succession, shall be liable to lose his membership in the Synod, by a vote thereof.

6. No minister of the gospel shall be a member of this Synod who shall not sign the pledge of total abstinence from intoxicating liquors as a beverage; or who is a slaveholder, or traffics in human beings, or advocates the system of slavery as it exists in these United States.

Article IX:—*Of Licentiates.*

1. A licentiate has power to perform all the ministerial functions during the time specified in his license, and he is amenable for his conduct to the Conference to which he belongs, with a right of appeal to the Synod.

2. A licentiate may visit and locate in any vacant church or churches, and the Ministerium or President may recommend and advise him to take charge of particular churches.

3. It shall be his duty to attend the sessions of the Synod and make the necessary parochial reports, or transmit them by letter, together with the excuse for his non-attendance.

4. It is the duty of every licentiate to pursue his theological studies with diligence, and particularly such as shall be prescribed by the Ministerium; he shall attend to every duty and means to improve his his heart in holiness and grace, and also receive from time to time counsel from the President and apply to him for advice and instruction in all cases of difficulty.

Article X:—*The Ministerium.*

1. The Ministerium shall consist of the ordained ministers united with this Synod. Licentiates may take part in the discussions and make motions, but have no vote.

2. Any ordained minister united with this Synod, though not officiating as a Pastor but employed as a missionary or engaged as professor or instructor in a literary or theological institution, shall retain his seat and vote in the Ministerium.

3. The Ministerium shall examine and license applicants and ordain candidates for the ministry.

4. All business not specifically entrusted to the Ministerium shall belong to the Synod.

5. The greatest care should be taken that no person be introduced into the gospel ministry who is not duly qualified for the sacred office; therefore licensure and ordination shall in no instance be granted unless satisfactory evidence be given of elevated piety and real conversion to God—of regular church membership, and that the applicant

possess a good knowledge of theology, and other qualifications required in the sacred scriptures.

6. It is recommended to all who have a call to preach the gospel, who have the means and whose circumstances in life will permit, to obtain a thorough literary and theological education, and especially a knowledge of the Old and New Testaments in their original languages.

7. A majority of two-thirds of the ordained ministers present, shall be required for licensing an applicant, or renewing a license, or the ordination of a licentiate.

8. All licenses shall extend until the next annual meeting of the Synod; and no individual shall be ordained until he has been on probation as a licentiate at least one year.

9. The examination shall be conducted by a committee of two ordained ministers, besides the President, appointed at the time, or at a previous session of the Synod in ministerium; but in all cases the applicant shall relate his religious experience before the whole ministerium, after which any member may ask questions.

ARTICLE XI:—*Of Conferences.*

1. The Synod shall be divided into two or more conferences, to be composed of all the ministers, licentiates and preachers within the district. A conference shall not consist of less than five ministers, two of which may be licentiates, and when the number is upwards of ten the Synod may form a new district.

2. The conference shall be organised by the appointment of a chairman and secretary; and opened by reading a portion of scripture and prayer.

3. When the President of the Synod is present, he shall preside and shall give the casting vote.

4. It shall always require a majority of all the members of the conference to form a quorum to transact business. Preachers and delegates from churches have a right to speak and offer resolutions, but have no vote.

5. Each Conference shall have power to examine into the official character of all its members—to inquire into the state of religion in the churches of the district—to grant licenses during the recess of the Synod, to persons qualified as licentiates and give certificates to Preachers, to recommend persons to be fully licensed to the Synod, and to spend one session always in conversation on pastoral duties and experience.

6. The Conference shall give no certificate to any as a preacher, or license any person as licentiate, except the applicant be a man of genuine piety, respectable attainments, gifts to teach, and at least an ability to state and defend the fundamental doctrines of the Bible.

7. It is the duty of a Preacher, to preach the gospel, to instruct the

young—to attend prayer meetings and to visit the sick and the members of the church. These duties are to be confined to the church or churches mentioned in his certificate, and he shall employ the remainder of his time in studying the bible and such a course of reading as shall be laid down by the Synod.

8. A preacher shall be under the care, direction and inspection of some ordained minister, or of the conference in general.

9. After the Conference shall have finished their business, they may continue their meeting for two or more days with a view to awaken and convert sinners and to edify and strengthen believers by close and practical preaching of the gospel.

10. Each Conference shall make a report to the Synod of the persons licensed by them and who have been received as preachers, and where they are located.

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ARTICLE XII :—*Declaration of Faith.*

The Holy Scriptures.

1. We believe the Scriptures are the inspired word of God, and contain an infallible rule of faith and practice for mankind.

Of God and Creation.

2. That there is only one true and living God, called and made known by revelation under the name of Father, Son and Holy Ghost; infinite and immutable in all natural and moral perfections; the Almighty maker of Heaven and Earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

Primitive State of Man and his Apostacy.

3. That man was created in the image of God, free from sin and every moral imperfection; that he fell by disobedience from this state, and became morally depraved in his nature, and that in consequence of his sin, he transmitted his moral pollution and sinful propensities to all his posterity.

Jesus Christ and Redemption.

4. That Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, in the fulness of time, was manifested in the flesh, and is the only Redeemer—that he was crucified, dead and buried—that he arose from the dead, ascended into heaven and is now exalted at God's right hand, to make intercession for the whole human race.

The Way of Salvation and the Atonement.

5. That God, who is rich in mercy, has not left mankind to perish in that state of misery which they have deserved by their sins; but has in his infinite love provided a way of salvation, through the atoning death of Jesus Christ, his beloved Son—that his sacrifice has made an ample and sufficient atonement for the sins of the whole human race, and that the saving benefits of the atonement are freely and sincerely offered to all men by the gospel, but that those only who repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ will be saved.

Of Justification.

6. That men are not justified on account of any merits or works of their own, but are freely justified by faith in the atoning blood of Christ, for whose sake only God pardons sin.

Of the Holy Ghost and Sanctification.

7. That the Holy Ghost is given to quicken and renew the hearts of men, and that the influence of the Spirit and the word of God are indispensably necessary to bring sinners to repentance—produce saving faith—sanctify the soul and perfect our holiness.

Admission to Membership.

8. That there is a necessity of a radical change of heart and that none should be admitted to the membership and privileges of the church, but such as give a credible evidence of being born again, and are living according to the precepts and requirements of the gospel.

Gospel Ordinances.

9. That Christ has instituted the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper for the perpetual observance and edification of the church ; baptism is the initiatory ordinance, and signifies the necessity of holiness of heart, and the Lord's Supper is frequently to be celebrated as a token of faith in the atonement of Christ and of brotherly love.

Duties of Christians.

10. That the keeping of the moral law as a rule of life, a conscientious and uniform attendance on public and private worship, and an entire submission to the regular authority and discipline of the church, and observance of all its institutions; and whatever else may tend to promote the glory of God and the salvation of men, are duties which every christian is under solemn obligation to perform.

Final Judgment and Future State.

11. That Jesus Christ will come the second time when he will judge the world in righteousness ; that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust, and that he will receive the righteous into life eternal, but the wicked will be sent into endless punishment.

ARTICLE XIII :—*Amendments and Alterations.*

This Constitution shall not be altered or amended except by a vote of two-thirds of all the members of the Synod, at an annual session of the Synod.

On motion of Br. Reagles

Resolved, That a committee be appointed to prepare and publish in behalf of this Convention an Address to the Churches.

The Chairman appointed Brs. P. Wieting, Lawyer, Weatherwax, H. J. Diefendorf, A. Walradt, Shutts and Reagles.

Resolved, That when this Convention adjourn, it adjourn to meet in this place at one o'clock this afternoon, for the purpose of organizing the Synod.

On motion of Br. Lawyer,

Resolved, That the members of this Convention, from the several ministerial districts, be authorised to appoint one of their number as delegate of the Synod, and that the remainder of the members be enrolled as Commissioners.

On motion of Br. Waggoner

Resolved, That this Convention separate with feelings of gratitude and devout thanks to Almighty God for the union and harmony which has characterised its proceedings, and for the encouragement to future effort in the cause of religion.

The business of the Convention being now finished, and the hour of twelve o'clock having arrived, it was

Resolved, That the Convention do now adjourn.

Convention closed with prayer by Br. Philip Wieting.

MARTIN MARCLEY, *Chairman.*

A. L. WEATHERWAX, *Secretary.*